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# Letters to the Editor

## Visas for the Treppers

To the Editor:

It has come to our attention through The New York Times and other sources that the Jewish communal leader Leopold Trepper (also known as Leib Domb) and his wife, both in failing health, have made several appeals to the proper authorities for permission to leave Poland for Israel to be reunited with their sons and their families. On each occasion their application for an exit visa has been denied them.

Mr. Trepper is the legendary hero of the "Red Orchestra," the famous Soviet intelligence agency which operated in occupied Europe during World War II. Under his resourceful leadership this underground organization penetrated the top echelons of Nazi intelligence and obtained secret information vital to the Allied cause. By Heinrich Himmler's own admission the activity of the "Red Orchestra" cost the German Army the lives of 200,000 soldiers.

Upon his return to the Soviet Union after the war, Leopold Trepper was rewarded by Stalin with a ten-year prison term in the notorious Lubianka prison, where he contracted Berger's disease and developed a cardiac condition. After Stalin's death he was vindicated of all charges against him and "rehabilitated."

In 1957 he returned to his native Poland where he assumed leadership of the Jewish Social and Cultural Association and headed the Jewish publishing house, Yiddish Buch, positions he held until the recent revival of anti-Semitism in Poland that began in 1968 compelled him to resign his posts in protest.

Now we are informed that in July of this summer Leopold Trepper and his wife were subjected to new harassments. They were arrested in the resort town of Zakopane, together with the Belgian film director, Roland Per-

rault, who had come to Poland to interview and photograph Mr. Trepper for a projected film on the activities of the "Red Orchestra" in Belgium during World War II. Mr. Perrault was later released and expelled from the country. His films were confiscated. The Treppers, after being held in prison for a week, were allowed to return to their apartment in Warsaw where they now live in a state of virtual house arrest.

We are shocked and dismayed at this cruel and unjust treatment meted out to a man whose wartime activities contributed substantially to the shortening of World War II. It would seem that in this particular case a sense of elementary justice should move the Polish authorities to let these two aging and ill people emigrate to the land of their choice so that they may live out the remaining years of their lives reunited with their children.

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